Ancient Egypt by David P. Silverman; Searching for Ancient Egypt: Art, Architecture, and Artifacts from the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology by David P. Silverman
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Ancient Egypt. Edited by DAVID P. SILVERMAN. New York: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1997. Pp. 256, illustrations. $39.95.

Searching for Ancient Egypt: Art, Architecture, and Artifacts from the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Edited by DAVID P. SILVERMAN. Ithaca, N.Y.: CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1997. Pp. 342, maps, illustrations. $60.

The study of ancient Egypt has changed so much over the years that David P. Silverman, the editor of both these books, felt it was time for a new examination of the subject. Assembling a crack team that reads like a who's who of Egyptology. Silverman has accomplished his mission superbly, bringing together in the first of these books a number of disciplines and updating readers on the latest in the field. Lavishly illustrated, with numerous sidebars adding to the text, the volume contains information that is as easy to read as it is to find.

The book is divided into three major sections, further subdivided into fifteen chapters. The first section, on history and geography, opens with a chapter by F. Hassan on the Nile River and its importance for Egyptian society. Chapter two, by W. J. Murnane, offers a lucid snapshot of the three millennia of ancient Egyptian history. The next chapter, by D. B. Redford, describes Egypt's relationship with its neighbors to the north and south; this includes a segment on trade in the eastern Mediterranean and the legacy of Egypt in the Classical world. Next comes another chapter on geography by F. Hassan, this time concentrating on food production in Egypt and its effect on the economy. I. Shaw's chapter five, called "The Settled World," studies the rise of urban life, and includes remarks on palaces and the Nubian fortresses from the Middle Kingdom. Chapter six, by G. Robins, surveys the position of women in society, their legal standing, and their role in the cult, and concludes with a segment on royal women. The last chapter in this section, by C. Eyre, examines the ancient Egyptians' world of knowledge, and includes segments on mathematics, medicine, technology, magic, and the arts.

The second major part of the book, on belief and ritual, begins with a chapter written by the editor, on the concept of kingship in ancient Egypt. This chapter examines the origin of kingship, the position of the king after his death, and the thorny question of the divinity of pharaoh. Next comes a chapter on the celestial realm by J. P. Allen, with discussions on cosmology and cosmogony, divine families such as the Ennead of Heliopolis, and some comments on the religion of Akhenaten. R. K. Ritner's chapter ten, on the cult of the dead, explores obvious topics like mummification and the Osirian cycle, but also offers insights into such singular matters as communication with the dead via letters, ghosts and exorcism, and the so-called mummy's curse. Chapter eleven, by E. Teeter, examines the world of cult and ritual through essays on the daily offerings in temples, ancestor worship, the smiting king motif, ritual gestures, divine festivals, and theogamy.

A chapter on the pyramids by Z. Hawass opens the third major section of the book, which concentrates on art, architecture, and language. From a historical overview of pyramids and their development, the author moves on to examine the theological basis of pyramids as well as more prosaic—but no less important—topics such as building a pyramid and quarrying the stone for such astonishing monuments. Chapter thirteen, on tombs and temples, is a contribution by P. Der Manuelian. Although tombs were examined earlier by Ritner, this chapter focuses mainly on the architectural development of the structures, and includes useful sections on temple administration and economy, as well as a marvelous artist's reconstruction of the temple of Amun at Karnak. Next comes a chapter on art by R. Freed. After introductory remarks on the artistic conventions in ancient Egypt, the author examines the changes observed at every turn throughout Egyptian history; the latter should go a long way to dispelling older notions that ancient Egyptian art was static and unchangeable. The book concludes with a chapter by the editor on language and hieroglyphs. Here he takes us on a journey of discovery, deciphering hieroglyphs with Champollion, examining the tools of the scribe's trade, the logistics of how hieroglyphs were used, and the evolution of the language. Again, readers who assume that the language of ancient Egypt never changed will be startled.

The book closes with a glossary and a useful bibliography. A quick perusal through the latter shows that the entries are all in English, which is perfectly understandable given the anticipated readership. Keeping this in mind, a few easily available and up-to-date items can nevertheless be added to the list: Mark Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids: Solving the Ancient Mysteries* (London,

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1997); Nicholas Reeves, *The Complete Tutakhamun: The King, The Tomb, The Royal Treasure* (London, 1990); Nicholas Reeves and Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Valley of the Kings: Tombs and Treasures of Egypt's Greatest Pharaohs* (London, 1995); and Gay Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge, 1997).

Additionally, the reviewer noticed a few slips of the pen: p. 10, the famous passage by Herodotus is misquoted: he did not say that Egypt was the gift "of the Nile," but rather "of the river (*toũ potamoũ*)" (Herodotus II: 5); p. 98, Meketre's models do not date to the Eleventh but rather to the Twelfth Dynasty; p. 159, the Opet Festival reliefs from the reigns of Tutankhamun and Sety I do not come from Karnak but from Luxor Temple; p. 167, the caption should read gilded coffin rather than mummy mask; and throughout, correct *maʾat* to *maʿat*.

These minor items should in no way detract from the value of the book. Well written and visually engaging, the volume is a delight to consult. It provides an excellent overview of "the latest" on ancient Egypt, and will prove to be an extremely useful reference.

* * *

Exhibition catalogues can be difficult to write. Who should the intended audience be? Specialists, who will wish to see a recent and detailed examination of every object in the show, complete with full bibliographical apparatus and comparanda? Or the general viewing public, who will be satisfied with good photographs and an accessible description of the material in the exhibition? Happily, the second volume under review reaches both communities, much the way the landmark catalogues of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, which effectively set the standard for exhibition catalogues, did in the 1980s,[1] with the added bonus that the present catalogue is fully illustrated in color.

The exhibition—consisting entirely of objects from the collection of the University of Pennsylvania Museum—was a collaborative effort between that museum and the Dallas Museum of Art. For the former, the show developed from the need to secure funding for proper conservation of many objects in the collection threatened by heretofore unsound environmental control. For the latter, this was an opportunity to showcase its talents in mounting, installing, and distributing major exhibitions. The happy cooperation produced a first-class exhibition that traveled to six venues: the Dallas Museum of Art, the Denver Art Museum, the Seattle Art Museum, the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, the Birmingham Museum of Art, and the Honolulu Academy of Arts (for a photograph of the striking display in the Dallas Museum, see R. Sanders, *KMT* 8:4 [Winter 1997–98], 19).

The volume opens with a preface by the editor, in which he details the history of the University of Pennsylvania Museum from its beginnings in the late nineteenth century to the major excavations undertaken by scholars in the last three decades. Their excavations at the site of Abydos have literally forced us to rewrite the history of a number of periods of Egyptian history. Other sites examined by the University Museum's curators include Giza, Memphis, Sakkara, Meidum, Bersheh, Thebes, Dendera, as well as sites in Nubia. The University Museum has an impressive record in advancing the field of Egyptology, and some of these excavations have considerably enhanced the Museum's collection. Notable are, for example, cat. nos. 50a and 50b, two architectural pieces belonging to Pharaoh Merneptah's royal palace at Memphis. In fact, this reviewer remembers well a visit he undertook a number of years ago to the actual site of the palace. Puzzled by the paucity of remains in Memphis itself, that evening I consulted the relevant volume of Porter and Moss[2] to find out the current whereabouts of the architectural remains of the palace, only to realize how much of it was now in Philadelphia!

After a brief historical introduction by D. B. Redford, the catalogue is divided into seven sections on specific themes. Each begins with a short essay by a scholar, followed by a description of the objects by various contributors. The themes pursued are divine art (A. P. Kozloff), royal art (E. R. Russmann), private art (R. E. Freed), architecture (D. O'Connor), personal and domestic artifacts (E. Brovarski), funerary arts (W. K. Simpson), and Nubian art (J. W. Wegner). With contributions by thirty-five authors, the catalogue is a marvel of erudition and concision. Each piece is described and its context explained, followed by a short bibliography.

What is particularly striking is the richness of the Museum's collection. From the exquisite grace of the prehistoric pottery (especially cat. no. 62a, a black-topped polished bowl) to the aforementioned New Kingdom palace remains, the catalogue shows unexpected breadth in its choice of objects. The curators are to be congratulated for their selection, always a difficult task. Among the 138 objects studied in the book, a few objects deserve mention here. Cat. no. 16 is a rare example of a Ptolemaic-period votive statuette of the god Nefertum, who

[1] E. Brovarski et al., eds., *Egypt's Golden Age: The Art of Living in the New Kingdom 1558–1085 B.C.* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982); S. d'Auria et al., eds., *Mummies and Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1988).

[2] B. Porter, R. L. B. Moss, and J. Málek, eds., *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings*, III: *Memphis*, part 2: *Saqqâra to Dahshûr*, fasc. 3. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 1981), 856.

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is both the son of the divinities Ptah and Sekhmet and, as such, part of the Memphite triad, but is also a symbol of solar regeneration. Cat. no. 23 is a calcite vase inscribed with the name of Narmer, a well-known but little-attested king. Cat. no. 35 is a particularly successful example of a Middle Kingdom statue-group where a whole family—in this case, mother and father, with two sons beside them—is shown in a single compact group. Another rare piece, cat. no. 51, is a relief showing the Jubilee festival of King Osorkon from Bubastis. Cat. no. 52 is a twenty-two-foot-long section of the Old Kingdom tomb chapel of a man named Kaipura, which weighs approximately five tons. Cat. no. 68 is a marvelous example of Eighteenth Dynasty so-called "blue-painted pottery," which served as wine jars. Cat. no. 72 is a magnificent lotus-shaped faience chalice from New Kingdom Nubia. Cat. no. 89 is an elaborately painted Twenty-First Dynasty anthropoid mummy case. Cat. no. 98 is a particularly successful example of a Third Intermediate Period small wooden stela. This list could go on, but I hope the reader gets the proper impression of the quality of the pieces presented in the catalogue.

Elaborately produced with excellent color reproductions of the objects and furnished with a detailed bibliography, a glossary of terms, a concordance of the museum accession numbers and catalogue numbers, and an index, the volume is an outstanding example of what an exhibition catalogue should be.

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The Tale of Sinuhe and other Ancient Egyptian Poems, 1940–1640 B.C. Translated by R. B. PARKINSON, with introduction and notes. Oxford: CLARENDON PRESS, 1997. Pp. xiv + 317.

This is R. B. Parkinson's second volume of translations of Middle Kingdom texts. The first, *Voices from Ancient Egypt*,[1] gives an overview of the writings of the period, including selections from a wide range of text types. Limited sections of many of the texts found in the work under review are also found in that volume.

The perspective of the present work is, however, distinctly different, as signaled in the title's reference to these texts as "Ancient Egyptian Poems." Included under this heading are thirteen oft-translated works of ancient Egyptian literature, divided into three major sections. The first is "Tales," where the perhaps best known compositions are found: *Sinuhe*, *The Eloquent Peasant*, *The Shipwrecked Sailor*, and the stories from the Westcar Papyrus, called here *The Tale of King Cheops' Court*. This is followed by what Parkinson terms "Discourses," and under that heading are found *The Words of Neferti*, *The Words of Khakheperseneb*, *The Dialogue of a Man and His Soul*, and *The Dialogue of Ipuur and the Lord of All*. The third section is entitled "Teachings" and comprises *The Teaching of King Amenemhet*, *The Teaching for King Merikare*, *The "Loyalist" Teaching*, *The Teaching of the Vizier Ptahhotep* and *The Teaching of Khety* (also known as *The Satire of the Trades*). A fourth and final section, called "Phrases and Fragments," adds translations and discussions of fragmentary texts such as *The Tale of the Herdsman*, *The Tale of the King and the Ghost*, *The Discourse of Scribe Sasobek*, and *The Teaching for Kagemni*. The rationale for this division is found in a detailed discussion of genre in a recent article by Parkinson.[2]

A compact introductory text covers a number of questions related to the literature of the ancient Egyptians, from the historical and social context to particulars of style. The author's treatment of these questions is impressive, much of it related to his earlier work.[3] Parkinson touches upon issues that are central to the study of ancient Egyptian literature, such as the role of the ethical concept *Maat*, the constraint of decorum, and the presumed social exclusivity of the written word. One topic currently under discussion concerns the distinguishing qualities of "literary" texts.[4] Parkinson attempts a general definition, calling literary texts "self-conscious and concerned with self-definition and expression," without being "bound to any context or situation." In addition, Parkinson sees a focus on "aesthetic considerations," with framing devices being used to dramatize "the speaker-hearer relationship." The most important attribute is, however, "fictionality," a term that has proved useful in this type of discussion, in that it differentiates royal and autobiographical texts with literary qualities from those works which, due to their fictional quality, correspond more closely to the modern concept of literature (p. 3).

Parkinson (p. 11) devotes considerable effort to the characterization of the language and stylistic devices used in the texts. "The discursive wisdom poetry in particular moves by syntax rather than metaphor . . . There is tendency towards simile

[1] London: British Museum Press, 1991.

[2] "Types of Literature in the Middle Kingdom," in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History & Forms*, ed. A. Loprieno, Probleme der Ägyptologie, vol. 10 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 297–312.

[3] E.g., "Teachings, Discourses and Tales from the Middle Kingdom," in *Middle Kingdom Studies*, ed. S. Quirke (New Malden: SIA, 1991), 91–122; "Literary Form and the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 78 (1992): 163–78; "'Homosexual' Desire and Middle Kingdom Literature," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 81 (1995): 57–76.

[4] Cf. A. Loprieno, "Defining Egyptian Literature: Ancient Texts and Modern Theories," in *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 39–58.

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